

REMARKS

It is noted with appreciation that claims 24-30 have been allowed and that claims 2-4, 8-12, 14-23 and 32-36 have been indicated to contain allowable subject matter. However, the recasting of the latter claims in independent form is being deferred, pending consideration of this amendment, which is believed to overcome the rejection of the base independent claims.

Claims 5-7 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. §112 as being indefinite in that they are inconsistent with the base claim 1. Claim 5 has been amended to an independent form, incorporating all of the limitations of claim 1, from which it depends, with the exception of the inconsistent limitation that “only one” local controller is directly connected to the host controller. It is believed that, as thus amended, claims 5-7 are now clear and definite.

Claims 1, 13, and 31 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102 as being anticipated by patent no. 6,331,756 to Belliveau, newly cited, which discloses a method and apparatus for digitally controlling a plurality of multi-parameter light fixtures. The examiner refers, in particular, to Fig. 6 of Belliveau, which discloses a system having a central controller 510 coupled by power lines 514 and a communications cable 516 to each of a plurality of multi-parameter light devices 520, 522, 524 and 526 which are arranged in a string, as regards the communications cable, but are connected in parallel to the power lines. One of the devices 520 is provided with a power line communications interface which can communicate with a further group of devices 532, 534, 536 over the power lines 514. The rejection is respectfully traversed.

First, it is noted that each of claims 1, 13 and 31 is directed to a “gaming system” or to a method of accessing devices “in a gaming system.” Belliveau is unrelated to a gaming system.

More importantly, each of applicants’ claims 1, 13 and 31 recites significant limitations which are not found in Belliveau. Each of the claims recites a “host controller” and a “plurality

of local controllers.” Assuming that the examiner reads the “local controller” on the device 520 of Belliveau, the Belliveau system has only one such local controller.

Furthermore, the claims require a “plurality of devices” to be individually accessed, further requiring that “each” local controller have “plural device terminals” which are “respectively connected to individual ones of the devices.” No such arrangement is disclosed or suggested by Belliveau. Assuming, *arguendo* that each of the Belliveau devices 520, 522, 524 and 526 could be considered to be a local controller, each such device has a data in terminal and data out terminal and two power terminals which could be considered the power and common terminals, but those are the only terminals provided. The claims require that each local controller have “plural device terminals” in addition to the data and power terminals. The Belliveau devices have nothing corresponding to the claimed device terminals. Rather, in Belliveau, the power terminals of the device 520 serve a dual function of providing power to the device and also providing communication signals over the same power lines to other devices 532, 534 and 536. Furthermore, assuming that the device 520 power terminals correspond to the claimed “plural device terminals,” they are connected in parallel to the devices 532, 534 and 536 and are not “respectively” connected to “individual ones” of the devices, as required by applicants’ claims.

Additionally, claims 13 and 31 recite an arrangement wherein each of the local controllers includes an “M-bit shift register”, so that the string of N nodes cooperate to provide an “MxN-bit shift register.” There is no suggestion of any such arrangement in Belliveau.

For all of the foregoing reasons, it is submitted that each of the independent claims 1, 13 and 31 clearly patentably distinguishes from Belliveau and, accordingly, reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejection of these claims is respectfully asked.

In view of the foregoing, it is believed that, as amended, the application is now in condition for allowance and the allowance thereof is respectfully requested.

Respectfully submitted,

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